

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2025 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-048-2025

Draft No.: 1

Committee: PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 10/16/2025

Action: FAVORABLE

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable, 3-0 (In favor: Council Members Dernoga, Hawkins, and Olson)

The Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee met on October 16, 2025, to consider CB-048-2025. This bill was previously held in committee on June 16, 2025. PHED Committee Director Rana Hightower summarized the purpose of the legislation and informed committee members about public comments and feedback received from agencies within Prince George's County

As presented on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, Draft-1 is for the purpose of enhancing tenant protections under consumer protection laws in response to widespread issues facing tenants from landlords' unfair or deceptive practices.

Ms. Miller-Whyte, from the County Council's Budget and Policy Analysis Division, explained that the bill would declare the following practices unlawful, unfair, and deceptive, in connection with actions by landlords, failure of the landlord to correct substandard living conditions of their rental properties, misleading advertising of amenities of their rental properties, landlord's failure to maintain essential services required on their rental properties, unwarranted fees assessed by landlords on tenants in their rental properties, and persistent housing violations by landlords on their rental properties.

In neighboring Montgomery County, a repair and deduct option is available for tenants. Tenants are authorized to use the repair and deduct provision when the department issues a violation. Once the violation is issued and the time to correct it has passed, the tenant may be authorized to use the repair and deduct provision. The tenant can deduct from the rent the reasonable cost of the repair, up to one month's rent.

The enactment of CB-048-2025 is not likely to have a direct fiscal impact. The indirect impact is unlikely to establish further protections for tenants against landlords engaging in deceptive practices.

Chair Burroughs, the bill sponsor, mentioned adding language within the Montgomery County Code to the bill. The language permits residents to deduct up to one month's rental payments for money paid for repairs. Additionally, Chair Burroughs inquired about the absence of a penalty list in the legislation. He asked if a fine from another section of the Prince George's Code requires a fine to be paid for a violation.

Ms. Miller-Whye explained that there are other sections of the Prince George's County Code that address specific amenities and outline associated fines. She recommended that the bill clarify what amenities are included under the legislation.

Mr. Maddox, Legislative Attorney, addressed Chair Burroughs' question about enforcement, explaining that in the 1990s, there was a Consumer Protection Division in the County, but it was moved to the Maryland Attorney General's Office. The legislation can be more stringent in defining what constitutes deceptive practices, but the Attorney General's Office will handle enforcement.

Ms. Owens, County Council Liaison with the Administration, explained that she had spoken with Ms. Lori Parris from the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE), and they can enforce the amenities outlined in the lease. If a citizen buys a home, DPIE does not have any enforcement power. Ms. Owens also mentioned that DPIE could meet with Chair Burroughs to discuss their enforcement powers. Chair Burroughs stated that he would be very interested in attending the meeting to ensure that CB-048-2025 can accomplish the necessary goals.

On motion of Council Member Hawkins, seconded by Council Member Olson, the PHED Committee voted 3-0 in favor of CB-048-2025.